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EAST AND WEST SERIES

No. 76 February, 1963

PRESENTED
9/231

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

T. L. VASWANI

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EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

9/231

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

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—The Manager

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ALTHOUGH I am physically distant from your great teacher, Vaswaniji, the close contact with him through the pages of your journal is nevertheless sweet and abiding to me. At the same time it is a joy to meet other Rishis and Saints, to review their lives and teachings, as well as to acquaint myself with contemporary followers of Truth.

Your great teacher, Vaswaniji, has a definite place in my consciousness. His thoughtful messages have helped me greatly to progress on the Godward path. His writings are rich with the vibrations of purity, prayer and service.

I enjoy every issue of your journal. And were I to have to forego it, it would be a sacrifice, indeed. The lustre of my life would truly be dimmed.

J. Surtees
Canada

I think that all who are sincerely interested in the values of the Spirit and in the teachings of the sages of East and West cannot help deriving moral assistance and inner peace from your lofty work.

Giuseppe Tucci
Editor, "East and West", Rome

THE world needs to realize unity. There is a new renaissance in India, as you declare. So mystics like Sri Vaswaniji, with such forthright and non-compromising humanitarian views, are needed more than ever.

Charles Witt
Editor, "Crusading for Health", England

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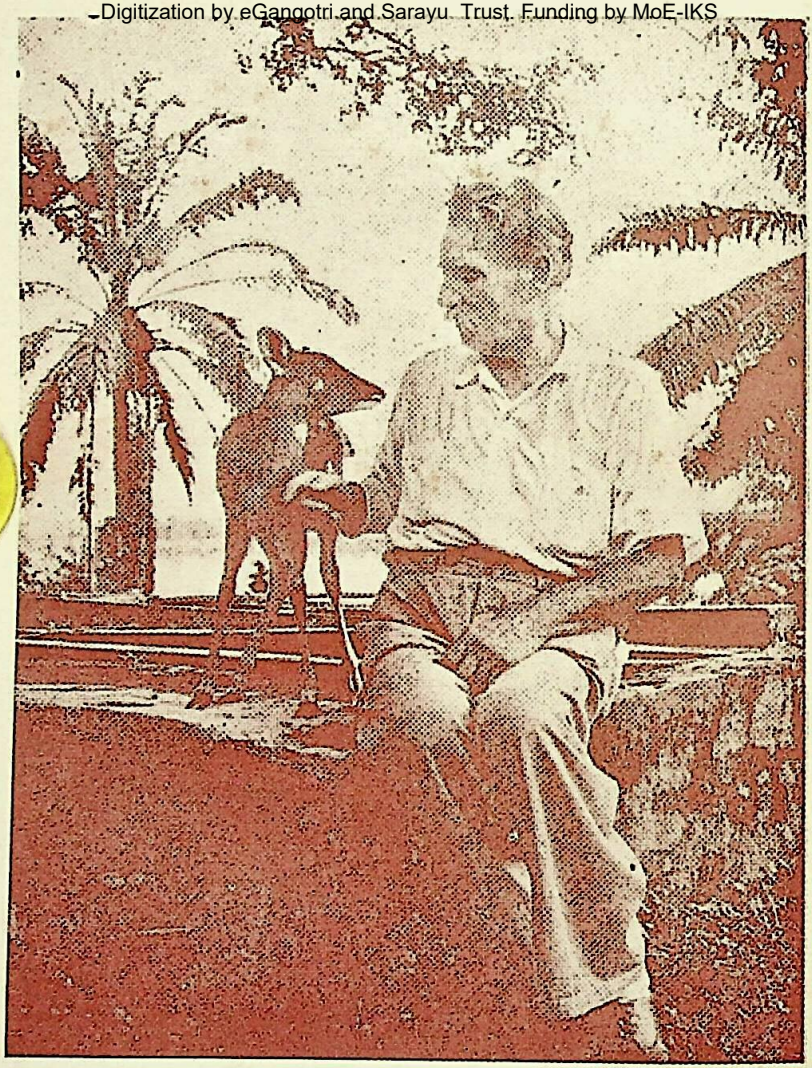

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

O Heavenly Father !
Protect and bless all things that have breath :
Guard them from all evil, ahd let them sleep in peace !

– Albert Schweitzer

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FOREWORD

SURVEYING the situation of the world, today, I have often felt that we stand at the cross-roads of history. Whither are we moving, today ? Does any purpose, moral or rational, guide man's sojourn on earth? Are we building a human society on earth?

When, millions of years ago, the neolithic man first looked at the universe, he wondered at the mystery of his life. "Which God shall we worship?" asked the Aryan of the Vedic age. He did not understand whither his destiny was moving. By a slow, painful process man learnt that he was moving to his goal,—that of a world-community.

Schweitzer is one of history's most amazing personalities,—a scholar who is become a servant of the poor and lowly, for the love of Christ,—a musician who sees the image of God in the faces of the forsaken negroes of South Africa.

He reminds us of Gandhi. In both I see a deep spirit of independence and dedication. Both see that civilisation has gone astray.

During the Boer War in Africa, Gandhi organised an Indian Red Cross to serve the wounded. When plague broke out, Gandhi personally attended to the sick, regardless of whether they were Indians or Whites. Gandhi used a weapon "that healed" against "the powerless weapons that killed,"—and Gandhi won ! The Hindus in South Africa were given their independence. General Smuts, the Commander of the Army which had been fighting against Gandhi, wrote to Gandhi :—"You help us in our day of need : how can we lay our hand upon you? You refuse to injure the enemy. You desire victory by self-suffering. You never transgress your self-imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is

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what reduced us to sheer helplessness!"

Schweitzer travelled from Europe to Africa to serve the negro in the negro's homeland. He wished to share the negroes' sorrows and to free them from their sad condition. So Gandhi served the untouchable in India, saying :—"I do not wish to be re-born : but if I have to be re-born, I should want to be of the untouchables so that I may share their sorrows." And Gandhi adopted an untouchable child in his family.

Both Schweitzer and Gandhi have reminded me, again and again, of Buddha. Both regard modern civilisation as a "failure."

I salute Dr. Albert Schweitzer as a Teacher of Humanity, a Prophet of Reverence for Life. In this atomic age, when the nations seem to be driving fast to a new period of chaos and darkness, here is a man, a thinker, a singer, a servant of Jesus, whose heart is filled with love profound for the poor and weak. And marvelling at the simplicity of his life, I have recalled to my mind some of the great *dervishes* and mystics of India and Iran.

Gifted with a marvellous mind, Schweitzer lives a life of singular simplicity and intense activity blended with the beauty of aspiration and interior life. He travels in a third-class carriage : and he carries his own luggage to the railway station. He believes in the cultural and spiritual values of manual work. With his own hands he brought big logs of wood to build his Hospital for the negroes. In the poor and needy, in the weary and heavy-laden, he beholds the face of his Master and, in serving them, he has the joy of serving Jesus.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer started, many years ago, his work of mercy at Lamberene, in the back woods of Africa. He realised that the Africans of the Congo were under the heavy hand of the European exploiter. In Africa, he says, "there

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prevail most of the diseases which we know in Europe; and several of them,—those hideous ones, I mean, which we brought here,—produce, if possible, more misery than they do amongst us." And he urged that he must redress the balance of his race by becoming a doctor, to serve the leper and the sick in the Congo.

He realised, many years ago, that civilisation was suffering from exhaustion. And he realised, too, to quote his own significant words, that "without a general spiritual experience, there is no possibility of holding our world back from the ruin and disintegration towards which it is being hastened."

He was very young when the thought troubled him that there was unhappiness around him. "In my childhood," he said, "I never knew what it was to be really happy." The sight of cruelty to animals and birds saddened his heart, even in the days of his boyhood. And for them he prayed every night, as he went to bed for sleep :—"Heavenly Father! bless all things that have breath; guard them from evil; and let them sleep in peace!"

For fifty years and more, this profoundly spiritual thinker has borne witness to the truth that civilisation, if it is to be renewed and saved, must be re-built in reverence for life. In several numbers of the *East and West Series*, the thought has been affirmed that in a new reverence for life, in a new realisation of the truth that every life,—the life of man and bird and beast,—is sacred, is the hope of Humanity.

Schweitzer pleads for mercy to the animals. Appalling, indeed, is the suffering of these creatures whose helper and guardian man should be, just because man's mind is richer. Yet, alas! we let them suffer day by day. We let them go to the slaughter-house. We suffer them to be tortured. With anguish in my heart, I pray to Him, my Lord and my Master :—"O Thou, who hearest

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the pain of the weakest and the lowliest of Thy creatures! teach our hearts to hear their pain, to hear the voice of these voiceless ones, to hear them and to heal them."

Schweitzer sounds, again and again, the note of the Upanishads and the Gita : there is the Brotherhood of life. Respect it! Life is one! So do not separate man from the animal or the bird. This revered teacher of Humanity has repeatedly urged that, as the world is full of suffering, it is our duty to build a Brotherhood, a Fellowship of those who would bear and suffer for the poor and weak and serve them with love and compassion in their hearts. He stresses the thought that in the measure in which you think you are happy, you must renounce for the sake of those who suffer. You must in return give of your life for the lives of those who are in need and suffering. You must, in Schweitzer's beautiful words, become "an adventurer of self-sacrifice."

The idea of "reverence for life" is the secret of new civilisation. To defend the weak, to guard those who are below us in the scale of evolution is to grow in the nobility and strength of life. The bird and the beast cannot speak to us in the language we understand. They cannot protect themselves. For centuries they have suffered for our sins against them. The Blessed Buddha said :—"When wisdom came to me, I resolved to defend the weak : and to all living things I gave the compassion of my heart." Yes,—with wisdom grows *maitri*,—the feeling of kinship with all life. And *maitri*, compassion, will be, I believe, the basis of a new morality, a new culture, a new civilisation, in the coming days.

Slavery, in its gross forms, has been abolished in civilised areas. In the new era of awakening that is nigh, animal rights will, also, be recognised. Civilisation will become humanisation, and men will learn to bow in reverence to the sub-human God.

T. L. VASWANI

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A HEALER OF MEN

MANY years ago, I received a copy of a book whose title attracted me,—*Indian Thought*. The book bore an autograph of the author,—Albert Schweitzer. The name was familiar to me. I was acquainted with one of his earlier books, *The Decay and the Restoration of Civilisation*. As I studied, more and more, his thought and life, his figure grew upon me. I saluted him as a thinker, an ethical leader, a doctor, a singer and,—a seeker. I thought of him as of Gandhi, in my eastern way, as a servant of the *bodhisatvas*, a healer of men, a lover of humanity.

A student of Franco-German culture, Schweitzer has studied, also, the cultures of India and China. His remote ancestors were the Swiss. Born in 1875, in Alsace, he studied first in the Strassburg University, then in the Universities of Paris and Berlin. He was a Doctor three times over,—in philosophy, in theology, and in music,—while he was yet in his twenties. And, soon after, he won his fourth doctorate,—in medicine!

His interest in Africa was awakened at an early age. Albert Schweitzer was a boy when he listened to a talk by his father (a minister) on "Negroes and other people living in distant lands."

Schweitzer began to take deeper interest in the negro through the artistic activities of a great sculptor, named Bertholdi. He was the man who made the famous statue of "Liberty," which stands at the entrance of the New York harbour. Bertholdi had made, also, a statue of the "Negro" which stood in the Champ-de-Mars at Colmar. Lonely was the expression of the negro in the statue. The face looked so sad, so weary and heavy-laden. And every time

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Albert Schweitzer visited Colmar, he went to see that statue. He gazed at that sad and lonely face : and he thought of the millions of negroes in Africa. He never forgot them. Over and over again, Bertholdi's statue of the sad and lonely negro would rise before Schweitzer.

And gradually grew in his heart the resolve to prepare himself for service of the suffering negro in Africa. More than one university offered him a chair : he declined the offers. He was in the world not to make money but "to serve the love of Jesus." Many misunderstood him. Some called him quixotic, eccentric, conceited. They, he said, "tried to dig their fists into my heart." He blessed them all. Some said much learning had made him mad. He smiled.

A lover of the True, the Real, Schweitzer would not be conventional. He had the courage to be a non-conformist. At his final examination for the University Degree in Music, he felt he must not spend money on the customary formal suit. He borrowed a garment from his uncle, though Schweitzer was tall and slim and his uncle was short and stout!

"Civilisation," he says, "originates when men consecrate themselves to the service of life and of the world." And again :—"Nothing of real value in the world is accomplished without enthusiasm and self-sacrifice." Schweitzer sacrifices a promising career in order to go as a doctor into the dark African jungle. "I wanted to be a doctor," he says, "that I might be able to *serve* without having to *talk*." As a true disciple of Jesus he would *follow* the Master. He would not *talk* about the "religion of love," but try to "put it into practice." And, as a doctor, he would charge no fee. He would heal the negroes, take nothing from them, but give them food and education, free of charge. "Freely ye have received, freely give!" said Jesus to his disciples.

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In 1911, he leaves Europe and "the over-sophisticated atmosphere" of Europe for Africa. He quits civilisation for the forest. For to him has come a realisation of the truth that knowledge, by itself, is nothing. Knowledge must be transformed into sacrifice. The truly great man, said Confucius, is simple and honest and he puts himself below others. Albert Schweitzer goes out silently. He sees the "ruin and disintegration towards which the world is being hastened." And he believes that the way out of ruin and disintegration will be found when a number of individuals "discover for themselves a profound and steadfast attitude of life-affirmation."

He leaves Europe with compassion in his heart for the negro and with a silent vow to serve him, to lift him out of his harrowing conditions, to educate him morally and materially, to bring light to his mind and heart.

He speaks of the African negroes as a "brotherhood of those who are marked by suffering." He deeply regrets Europe's domination of the negro. He goes out silently "to expiate," if he can, "the sins of Christendom,"—and to repay the "debt" to Africa. "It is a debt of honour," he says. There is nothing heroic about it in his eyes. It is a simple matter of duty. So he turns his back on civilisation and goes into the wilderness to find and to serve the Spirit of Jesus.

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WHITHER CIVILISATION?

The re-birth of civilisation will not be achieved by science. This view, it is true, is not acceptable to many in the modern world. From many quarters comes the cry that the cure for decadence is education, literacy, science and technological inventions. The India that is emerging after *swaraj* is also becoming, I am afraid, a victim to this illusion that science and technology will re-build India and rejuvenate civilisation.

It is time to consider the whole question in a quiet, reflective spirit. It is time to ask ourselves,—does science make for ennoblement of character? Do we not find that many of those, whom we call highly educated and men of scientific equipment, do not resist temptations to lower life? Have not science and technology made for mass murders? "By their fruits ye must judge them,"—said Jesus. Judge, then, current education and science by their results. Do they tend to make us self-regarding, selfish, ambitious, destructive?

In Europe, education, science and technology have grown since the last few centuries. Have wars and revolutions shown a downward trend? Have we not passed through a bloody and turbulent century? Has war declined since the nineteenth century? Has the twentieth century been a century unfettered by wars and violence? Education has increased : scientific appliances and inventions have multiplied : has crime decreased?

What does our experience tell us? There are illiterate men. There are nations, too, less educated. Are they more criminal than literate ones? Do we not find that the criminals, themselves, are no less intelligent than non-criminals? Is intelligence invariably related to character?

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And, again, do current education and modern scientific training strengthen or do they diminish egoism? Has altruism grown as science has increased? Are intellectuals ethically superior to the rank and file, the common humanity?

Again, are we not in some measure aware already of the anti-social effects of science and technology? Think only of what the atomic bomb did in Japan! Two lacs of people were snuffed to death at a single outburst of the atomic bomb. Note, too, what the Nazi regime did on the strength of scientific knowledge and scientific equipment. Think of the dreadful consequences of bacteriological warfare. Dearly has the "tree of knowledge" cost humanity. It may be that this "tree of kwowledge," the tree of science, the tree of technology, the tree of misdirected intellectual energy, may destroy the very tree of human life. If science not only consents to be, but revels in becoming, a tool of the demon of destruction, science, far from becoming the right basis, the true foundation of a new civilisation, may destroy what little of true civilisation is with us today.

The re-birth of civilisation asks primarily not for science but for (1) ethical values and (2) rational thinking. Ethical values refer to altruism. Without altruism, selflessness of individuals and groups, altruism of social institutions and culture, without the energy of nations becoming truly altruistic, wars cannot be prevented. No parchments of paper, no verbal agreements, no league of nations, no united nations' organisations can really help. We find, today, that this civilisation, dominated by love of power and greed of gold, is become a horrible entanglement.

What is the way out of it,—I have been asked. My answer is,—it is the way of the altruistic man, the way of the non-attached man whereof the Gita speaks, the way of the stripped men, the way of those who would forsake all for the service of love. He who walks this way turns away

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from egotism and has a two-fold aspiration :—(1) to help others, and (2) to create harmony within himself. Through meditation you enter into harmony within you. You are at peace with yourself. And achieving this peace, you go out to be a helper of others.

I love to think of Albert Schweitzer himself as the non-attached man of the Gita. He is non-attached to power and possessions, non-attached to bodily comfort, non-attached to knowledge, science, philosophy, non-attached even to music for which there is a deep aspiration in his heart. I love to think that he believes, as does the Bhagavad Gita, in "spiritualised activity." "The Gita," he says, "is the most read and the most idealised book in world-literature." And he rightly says that the charm of the Gita "is due to the idea of spiritualised activity which springs only from the highest of motives," from "self devotion to God."

African negroes, he sees, suffer from the white man's exploitation. Indeed, mankind suffers from class-exploitation on a gigantic scale. He does not forget that Marx sounds a call to a new way of living. But he sees that the new way cannot be the way of Marx : the new way must be the way of Jesus,—the way not of physical force, not of violence, but of persuasion, of service, of prayer and sacrifice.

In a world made unhappy by the lust for profit, for wealth, for power, for violence and violent acquisition of the earth, Albert Schweitzer heard the voice of Jesus :—"Follow Me!" Was it a different voice that spoke to Arjuna :—"Renouncing everything, come unto Me and take refuge in Me"?

Do what thy Lord doth bid thee do!
Look thou not for the crowd's applause!

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Look thou alone to Him, His laws
Of Life, and e'er to Him be true!

All other life is life in chains,
In a world where none but phantoms dwell,
A tinkling of the camel-bell!
Who follows Him a new Life gains!

Albert Schweitzer holds that the call of true civilisation is an answer to an inner compulsion. True civilisation does not "escape" life but "expresses" life. He has no thought of "heroism." He recognises his "duty" and is up to do it!

Albert Schweitzer is a spiritual adventurer. The spirit of Jesus drives him into the wilderness of Africa. He renounces comforts of civilisation. He witnesses the wrongs the white men have inflicted on the black. We have sinned, he says, "against the poor man at our gate." The sadness of the negro haunts his mind. He asks:—

> Who can describe the injustice and the cruelties that in the course of centuries the coloured peoples have suffered at the hands of Europeans? Who can measure the misery produced among them by the fiery drinks and the hideous diseases that we have taken to them?....We and our civilisation are burdened, really, with a great debt. We are not free to confer benefits on these men or not, as we please: it is our duty. Anything we give them is not benevolence but atonement. For everyone who scattered injury, someone ought to go out to take help, and when we have done all that is in our power, we shall not have atoned for the thousandth part of our guilt.

Schweitzer, on his arrival at Lambarene (Congo), sat to work without delay. He sat in a building roofed with palm trees, by the river side, to administer relief to patients who came to him upstream and downstream from distances of a

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hundred miles and more. His patients continued to increase. In his first nine months he treated nearly two thousand patients.

He is a man of massive energy: he has a robust body: but he finds it difficult to witness the sufferings of many of his patients. Some rolled in the sand of their huts: some howled with agony: some were operated upon by him : and he held, by turn, the hand of each with a brother's grip. Listen to his words:—

> The African sun is shining: and we, black and white, sit side by side and feel that we know by experience the meaning of the words:— 'And ye all are brethren!'

They call him "medicine-man."

How grieved he felt when, in the African Forest, he learned that war had broken out in Europe! He gave up the comfortable belief in "continuous progress" of mankind. He found Europe suffered from "intellectual and spiritual fatigue." He saw that civilisation was crumbling. And at night, when the hard day's work was over, he sat in silence to think, "What is to be done for the restoration of civilisation?"

"Solitude of the primeval forest!" he exclaimed, "how can I ever thank you enough for what you have been to me?" In the forest it is that on him grows the thought,—as centuries ago in the *tapobans* of India, in silence and seclusion, grew on the *rishis* of old the thought,—of a world-view on which he builds his idea of a new civilisation. The old civilisation, he sees, is dying,—of greed and violence. The new civilisation,—so he sees swiftly in a flash,—must be built on reverence for life,—life in all human beings, the white, the brown, the coloured races, and life in all creatures, in bird and beast. Reverence for life becomes his keynote to new civilisation.

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Centuries ago came to the Aryan *rishis* of India as, indeed, to the sages of China and Egypt, in a supreme illumination of the secret of life, a vision of reverence for all life. In his autobiography, Schweitzer has a passage pregnant with deep feeling,—the feeling of a man who hath suddenly lighted upon a discovery. In this passage, Schweitzer tells us how there flashed upon his mind, "unforseen and unsought," this idea of reverence for life. He had moved out on one of his African errands of mercy. Then, in his own beautiful words:—

> Slowly we crept upstream, laboriously feeling,—it was the dry season,—for the channels between the sand-banks.
>
> Lost in thought I sat on the deck of the barge, struggling to find the elementary and universal conception of the ethical which I had not discovered in any philosophy.
>
> Sheet after sheet I covered with disconnected sentences merely to keep myself concentrated on the problem.
>
> Late on the third day, at the very moment when at sunset we were making our way through a herd of hipopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforseen and unsought, the phrase:—'Reverence for life.'
>
> The iron door had yielded. The path in the thicket had become visible.
>
> Now I had found my way to the idea in which world-and-life-affirmation and ethics are combined side by side. Now I knew that the world-view of ethical world-and-life-affirmation together with its ideals of civilisation is founded in thought.

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REVERENCE FOR LIFE

Reverence for life is the fundamental concept of ethics. Ethics is reverence for life. Its one essential rule, one *sadhana*, is that I give myself for other lives. For, all life is sacred, even the life of savages, of primitive peoples, of uncivilised ones, of wild jungle men, of the criminal, the robber,—of the bird and the beast. All life is sacred. All life has its claims on every one of us. True ethics, therefore, rests on a recognition of this thought,—the reverence for life.

When we renounce this reverence for life, we sink into unreason, into thoughtlessness. Every time there is war, there is lack of thought. War is irrational and, as results have shown, no party in the war really wins. War is a game of unreason.

Reverence for life includes (1) sympathy or fellow-feeling, and (2) something more, i. e. love.

Reverence for life is love for all living beings,—the whole universe. This reverence makes it imperative on us not to cause pain to anybody. This pain is triple,—pain by thought, pain by word, pain by deed.

Reverence for life demands of us unselfish service and devotion to others, and something more, sacrifice for others.

Further, reverence for life asks for love for the Absolute, i. e. love for God, the All-life.

He, who is filled with deep reverence for life, becomes creative, releases creative forces and, with the creative powers unfolded within him, he becomes a helper of all. He becomes what Eastern books call a *bodhisatva* or a servant of *bodhisatvas*. Such a man the Gita calls a *karma-yogi*. And Schweitzer I regard as a true *karma-yogi*.

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In reverence for life are emphasised the following elements :—

1. Affirmation of life.
2. Affirmation of the world as a theatre wherein is played the drama of life.
3. Service, not only of humanity but of all creatures.
4. Communion with God through love.

Reverence for life finds its fruitage and fulfilment in the will-to-love. He who is filled with reverence for life (1) awakens his interior life through communion with the Absolute or the Life Divine, and (2) on the outer plane, takes his share of the burden of pain that is found everywhere.

Why is there pain? Who can answer the question? Pain is a mystery, for life is a mystery. Enough for him, who has reverence for life, to know that there is pain, there is suffering. Enough for him to say, "I, too, shall bear a part of the burden of the pain that makes the life of the world and the life of humanity."

SCHWEITZER's beautiful life has been a running commentary on this great teaching of reverence for all life. Schweitzer's work is rooted in the great thought that all life is sacred. Therefore, he endeavours to help all life and to avoid injuring anything living. He breaks no ice crystals that sparkle in the sun. He tears no leaf from a tree. He plucks no flower. He is careful to see that, as he walks, he crushes no insect underfoot. If he works by lamplight, on a summer evening, he keeps the window shut and is content to breathe stifling air, rather than to see insects falling on his table. If an insect falls into a pool, he gives it a leaf or stalk to clamber up and be saved. If he sees a worm in a street after a rainstorm, he helps it into the grass. He prays for all creatures.

Schweitzer protests, again and again, against mal-treatment of animals. How we force them into bondage to ma

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and are not careful of the sufferings we inflict on them! The responsibility is upon us all. "Let no one shirk," he says, "the burden of his responsibility." Think of the cries of animals who thirst in railway-trucks and no water is given them! Think of our slaughter-houses! "We are all guilty," he says, "and must bear the blame."

"In ancient China," Schweitzer says, "the burning of forests was regarded a crime, because it meant painful death to so many creatures." There is burning, too, in our forests. The heavy timber, says Schweitzer, burns slowly and incompletely. And "I am seized by compassion," he says, "for the poor beasts that perish in these fires."

The catalogue of our sins against birds and beasts is a long one. Think of what we do to pluck feathers of birds for our pleasure! Think of what independent India is doing in her dealings with monkeys! There is continuous traffic in monkeys via London Airport to America. Some years ago, about four hundred rhesus monkeys were suffocated in an unventilated van at London Airport. Schweitzer cares for stray monkeys that come to his gate. Listen to his words:—

> Sometimes, there will come to our monkey colony a wee baby-monkey whose mother has been killed, leaving this orphaned infant. I must find one of the older monkeys to adopt and care for the baby. I never have any difficulty about it, except to decide which candidate shall be given the responsibility. Many-a-time it happens that the seemingly worst tempered monkeys are most insistent upon having this sudden burden of foster-parenthood given to them.

CURRENT civilisation is decadent because it turns a deaf ear to the ever-increasing agony of men and women, of birds

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and beasts. The foundation of a new civilisation must be the service of mercy or love. This service grows out of reverence for life, for all life. In this service is the strength of altruistic men and women. In this service is the strength which noble servants of humanity and creation receive to bear the burden of suffering and responsibility laid upon them, year after year. In a passage of lyric beauty, Schweitzer says in his autobiography:—

> In my own life anxiety, trouble and sorrow have been allotted to me at times in such abundant measure that had my nerves not been so strong, I must have broken down under the weight. Heavy is the burden of fatigue and responsibility which has been laid upon me without a break for years. I have not much of my life for myself, not even the hours I should like to devote to my wife and child.
>
> But I have had blessings, too: that I am allowed to work in the service of mercy, and that I can recognise as such whatever happiness falls to my lot, accepting it also as a thing for which some thanksgiving is due from me.

Schweitzer finds how much the negroes suffer in Africa. And Schweitzer hears the wailing of the negro women-folk. Soon after Schweitzer went to Africa, the world-war broke out and he saw how negroes were being taken forcibly as recruits for war. In a moving passage, Schweitzer tells us of how he saw an old woman, whose son had been taken, weeping silently. Schweitzer says:—"I took her hand, and tried to comfort her: but she went on crying as if she did not hear me. Suddenly, I felt that I was crying, too, silently as she was, towards the setting sun."

Not without reason does Schweitzer add:—"Europe is ruined and full of wretchedness. Nevertheless, I have not lost courage. The misery I have seen gives me strength."

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THE COMPASSIONATE ONE

SCHWEITZER is eager to see men and women banded together to build a Fellowship to serve the oppressed and afflicted, men and birds and beasts,—to serve those "who bear the mark of pain." Yes,—this man with a strong body has a heart infinitely tender, has a soul full of compassionate love.

Many incurables are brought to his Hospital. He serves them disinterestedly. He serves them untired, strong as ever in the presence of His Master. "If I cannot save them from death," he says, "I can at least show them love and, perhaps, make their end easier."

The number of his patients increases. He needs more beds and bed-frames. He is a doctor: he turns a carpenter and a labourer. He fetches wood and cuts it to the size required. He has faith in God and in human nature: and he has a sense of humour. Labour is, indeed, an important item in his programme of work. He sits with the negroes and cuts wood required for his Hospital. In this intimacy of communion with the negro he wins their hearts. "I daresay," he writes, "we should have fewer difficulties with our 'savages,' if we could, occasionally, sit round the fire with them and show ourselves to them as men."

This Doctor of medicine becomes, by turn, an architect, a builder, a manual worker, and an educator. Manual labour, indeed, is an integral part of his programme in education. "How true it is," he says, "that civilisation does not begin with reading and writing but with maual labour!"

He regrets to find that negroes have wrong education. They have learnt to read and write without learning to use their hands. One day, he is hauling beams and planks : suddenly, he catches sight of a negro in white suit and cries

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out:— "Hullo, friend! won't you lend us a hand?"

And the "educated" negro says:—"I am an intellectual: I don't drag wood about!"

"You are lucky," says the doctor; "I, too, wanted to be an intellectual, but didn't succeed."

Schweitzer writes :—"Had I any say in the matter, no student would be allowed to read and write without being apprenticed to some trade. No training of the intellect without simultaneous training of the hands."

Schweitzer believes in labour, but he would not inflict excessive labour or overwork on any. Excessive amount of labour, he rightly thinks, does harm to the labourer's spiritual element. On this account, Schweitzer is not in favour of compulsory labour enforced by the State. He holds that labour compulsion is not wrong in principle. But he thinks it is impossible to carry it through in practice. "There is always the danger," he says, "that compulsory labour may become secretly but really a kind of slavery."

In his study of Goethe, Schweitzer points out that he found a point of contact with Goethe in "the union of creative with practical, serviceable activity." Goethe, we are told, was a "giant among the intellectuals," yet he "deemed no task too lowly that could be of service to his fellows." In his "Goethe Prize Address," delivered by Schweitzer, many years ago, he said:—

> It made a wonderful impression on me that Goethe, whom we regarded as an Olympian, set out amid November rain and mist to visit a minister's son, who was in great difficulties, and gave him suitable help. It struck me in connection with Goethe's activities that he could not think of any intellectual employment without practical work side by side with it. It gripped me deeply

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that for this giant among the intellectuals there was no work which he held to be beneath his dignity, no practical employment of which he ever said that others on account of their natural gifts and of their profession could do it better than he, and that he was always ready to prove the unity of his personality by the union of practical work with intellectual activity.

In a later address delivered at Cambridge on "The Philosophical Development of Goethe," Schweitzer said:—"Goethe devoted himself to the service of his fellow-men. With Goethe thought and conduct were one: and that is the best thing one can say of any thinker."

No words could, I think, interpret Schweitzer's own outlook on life better than these:—"Thought and conduct are one." In the African forest, he has communed with nature, has held converse with the Life that blossoms in beauty and stirs in cosmic forces. He has dreamt of a new day when tyrannies will be broken and peoples will be set free, when civilisation will be restored and humanity rejuvenated. He has dreamt of a new mystic fellowship of nations in which all the peoples will form One People of God and in His sight, "whose eyes are as the sun," all nations and all races will re-unite in the One Spirit.

SCHWEITZER'S life is a marvellous witness to the principle of compassion. As a doctor, he treats free lepers whose fingers wear away, whose very toes disappear. He treats patients stricken with dangerous dysentry. A man's hand was torn by the teeth of a guerilla: Schweitzer treated him with wonderful sympathy in his heart. He has treated several persons who suffered from sleeping sickness. He feels his unity with little children and has treated so many in malarial coma. He has treated patients afflicted with

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strangulated hernia.

Schweitzer believes that both these things are necessary:—(1) active help of suffering creation; and (2) inner purification. Twofold, then, is his ethic:—(1) the ethic of service; and (2) the ethic of inner purification.

Schweitzer is the very picture of compassion and sympathy. The ancient ethic of China, to which Lao-Tse bore witness, was practised by contemplatives in their monasteries. The rules of Taoism put into practice in these monasteries will have the fullest approval of Schweitzer. In these rules is enshrined a whole theory, put into practice, of compassion, which is essential to the re-building of our civilisation, which suffers today from decadence. Here are some of the rules put into practice by the Taoist monks:—

1. Thou shalt not whip nor beat domestic animals.
2. Thou shalt not intentionally or carelessly crush beneath thy feet insects and ants.
3. Thou shalt not climb trees to take nests and destroy the eggs.
4. Thou shalt not take delight in fish-hooks or arrows in order to get amusement.
5. Thou shalt not catch birds or animals in snares and nets.
6. Thou shalt not alarm and scare away birds sitting in their nests.
7. Thou shalt not pluck flowers nor pluck up grass without reason.
8. Thou shalt not cut down trees without reason.
9. Thou shalt not burn commons nor hill-side woods.

One of the sayings in Mahayana Buddhism is:—"As long as living creatures suffer, there is no possibility of joy to those who are full of compassion."

So the Mahayana asks us to pray for all beings (1) that they may suffer no want; (2) that all be spared pain and sickness; (3) that no beings may be deserted and oppressed;

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and (4) that all beings may pass a happy life free from care.

We are asked to offer prayers not only for creatures on this earth but for all living things in all the worlds. Here is one such prayer offered us for guidance:—

In all lands may all the sufferings of living beings come to an end! May the beaten be freed from blows! May those who are threatened with death be restored to life! May those who are in tribulations become free from all pain!

May those who suffer hunger and thirst receive food and drink in abundance!

May the blind see and the deaf hear and women with children give birth painlessly!

May sounds of pain be nowhere heard in the world!

May living creatures avoid the low way!

May the torments and anguish of those who dwell in *narka lokas* come to an end!

May the animals renounce the habit of devouring each other!

May the ghosts be happy!

May living beings be liberated from the cycle of re-incarnation!

SCHWEITZER has dreamt: but he is not a dreamer. He has laboured, he has toiled, and with ever-increasing strength borne witness to world-and-life-affirmation. And he has practised the living ethic of love. This ethic, I am happy, is revealed in the *Kural*,—the sayings of the South Indian saint, Tiruvalluvar,—and in Ramananda and the Vaishnava lyrics of Bengal. Full of admiration for them is Schweitzer. He rejoices in Ramananda in whom "is developed the thought that devotion to God must be manifested in love to man."

Full of praise, too, is he for Tagore. Schweitzer writes:—

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"Tagore, the Goethe of India, has expressed the affirmative world-view in a manner more profound, more powerful, and more charming than any man has ever done before him. This completely noble and harmonious thinker belongs not only to his own people but to Humanity."

Schweitzer turned his back on civilisation and went into the wilderness, silently. And for fifty years and more he has served the negro, silently. He is so different from most of the world's great men whose chief end and aim is,—fame. He has not coaxed the press. He is not one of the "celebrities" of the conventional type: when they open their mouths, six cameras click and ten fountain pens flow! He is not in the ranks of colourful space-getters in the press.

Unasked, unsought, fame has come to this prophet of profound thinking, this brother of the negro, this servant of the Spirit of Jesus. The nations alike in East and West rejoiced on receiving the news that Schweitzer was awarded the Nobel Prize for 1953. True power, he says, makes no noise. It is the ancient teaching of the East. How different from the teaching of Kipling,—the "Poet of the Empire," to whom the Orient represented a setting for the display of British "military valour"!

There are not a few of the world's thinkers, today, who believe that Europe is on the verge of another Dark Age. It cannot be denied that we are living in an epoch of danger. For science and its control over the forces of nature can be, have been, put to inhuman uses: and cities, cathedrals, libraries and shrines of art, and men and women and children and animals and birds have been exterminated wholesale.

Seers and heroes like Gandhi and Tagore, Kagawa and Tolstoy have departed But still with us, in East andWest, are mystics of action like Schweitzer and Father Pire, and in the lonely hour of our watching for a New Dawn, we yet believe that the race is not ended, nor the torch gone out!

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THE WISDOM OF SCHWEITZER

In the following pages are given a few brief extracts from the writings of Dr. Albert Schweitzer. They are inspired by the one mystic vision of the One Life in all that lives and breathes and moves on earth and sea.

This vision of the Brotherhood of Life is verified in the measure in which we are true to the two great ideas of constructive civilisation :—(1) reverence for life, and (2) compassion to the weak and suffering ones.

These two ideas will greatly help in ending the political war which is being waged, today, by the two great power-systems,—America and Russia. World-peace will not be achieved until we have moved beyond the power-principle of politics to the principle of reverence for life,—the great thought of both Gandhi and Schweitzer.

* * *

One day, in my despair, I threw myself into a chair in the consulting-room and groaned out :—"What a blockhead I was to come out here to doctor savages like these!"

Whereupon Joseph quietly remarked :—"Yes, Doctor, here on earth you are a great blockhead, but not in heaven."

*

Anyone who proposes to do good must not expect people to roll stones out of his way, but must accept his lot calmly if they even roll a few more upon it.

A strength which becomes clearer and stronger through its experience of such obstacles is the only strength that can conquer them.

Resistance is only a waste of strength.

*

An uncomfortable doctrine prompts me in whispered words.

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You are happy, it says. Therefore, you are called to give up much.

Whatever you have received more than others in health, in talents, in ability, in success, in a pleasant childhood, in harmonious conditions of home life, all this you must not take to yourself as a matter of course.

You must pay a price for it.

You must render in return an unusually great sacrifice of your life for other life.

The voice of the true ethic is dangerous for the happy when they have the courage to listen to it. For them there is no quenching of the irrational fire which glows in it. It challenges them in an attempt to lead them away from the natural road, and to see whether it can make them the adventurers of self-sacrifice, of whom the world has too few.

*

Slowly in our European thought comes the notion that ethics has not only to do with mankind but with the animal creation as well.....

A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help.

*

A man is really ethical only when he obeys the constraint laid on him to help all life which he is able to succour, and when he goes out of his way to avoid injuring anything living.

He does not ask how far this or that life deserves sympathy as valuable in itself, nor how far it is capable of feeling.

To him life as such is sacred.

*

It is the fate of every truth to be an object of ridicule when t is first acclaimed.

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It was once considered foolish to suppose that coloured men were really human beings and ought to be treated as such. What was once foolishness has now become a recognised truth.

Today it is considered as exaggeration to proclaim constant respect for every form of life as being the serious demand of a rational ethic. But the time is coming when people will be amazed that the human race was so long before it recognised that thoughtless injury to life is incompatible with real ethics.

Ethics is in its unqualified form extended responsibility with regard to everything that has life.

*

I never go to a menagerie because I cannot endure the sight of the misery of the captive animals. The exhibiting of trained animals I abhor. What an amount of suffering and cruel punishment the poor creatures have to endure in order to give a few moments' pleasure to men devoid of all thought and feeling for them.

*

Whenever I injure life of any kind I must be quite clear as to whether this is necessary or not. I ought never to pass the limits of the unavoidable, even in apparently insignificant cases.

The countryman who has mowed down a thousand blossoms in his meadow as fodder for his cows should take care that on the way home he does not, in wanton pastime, switch off the head of a single flower growing on the edge of the road, for in so doing he injures life without being forced to do so by necessity.

*

Those who test operations or drugs on animals, or who inoculate them with diseases so that they may be able to help human beings by means of the results thus obtained

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ought never to rest satisfied with the general idea that their dreadful doings are performed in pursuit of a worthy aim.

It is their duty to ponder in every separate case whether it is really and truly necessary thus to sacrifice an animal for humanity.

They ought to be filled with anxious care to alleviate as much as possible the pain which they cause.

How many outrages are committed in this way in scientific institutions where narcotics are often omitted to save time and trouble!

How many also when animals are made to suffer agonising tortures, only in order to demonstrate to students scientific truths which are perfectly well known.

*

WHEREVER any animal is forced into the service of man, the sufferings which it has to bear on that account are the concern of every one of us.

No one ought to permit, insofar as he can prevent it, pain or suffering for which he will not take the responsibility.

No one ought to rest at ease in the thought that in so doing he would mix himself up in affairs which are not his business.

Let no one shirk the burden of his responsibility.

When there is so much maltreatment of animals, when the cries of thirsting creatures go up unnoticed from the railway trucks, when there is so much roughness in our slaughter-houses, when in our kitchens so many animals suffer horrible deaths from unskilful hands, when animals endure unheard-of agonies from heartless men, or are delivered to the dreadful play of children, then we are all guilty and must bear the blame.

*

A flock of wild geese had settled to rest on a pond. One of the flock had been captured by a gardener, who had

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clipped its wings before releasing it. When the geese started to resume their flight, this one tried frantically, but vainly, to lift itself into the air. The others, observing his struggles, flew about in obvious efforts to encourage him; but it was no use. Thereupon, the entire flock settled back on the pond and waited, even though the urge to go on was strong within them. For several days they waited until the damaged feathers had grown sufficiently to permit the goose to fly. Meanwhile, the unethical gardener, having been converted by the ethical geese, gladly watched them as they finally rose together, and all resumed their long flight.

*

A friend in Hanover owned a small cafe. He would daily throw out crumbs for the sparrows in the neighbourhood. He noticed that one sparrow was injured, so that it had difficulty getting about. But he was interested to discover that the other sparrows, apparently by mutual agreement, would leave the crumbs which lay nearest to their crippled comrade, so that he could get his share, undisturbed.

*

It is only through love that we can attain to communion with God. All living knowledge of God rests upon this foundation : that we experience Him in our lives as will-to-love.....

To be glad instruments of God's love in this imperfect world is the service to which men are called, and it forms a preparatory stage to the bliss that awaits them in the perfected world, the Kingdom of God.

*

The highest knowledge is to know that we are surrounded by mystery.

*

Let us rejoice in the truth wherever we find its lamp burning.

*

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THERE can be no Kingdom of God in the world without the Kingdom of God in our hearts.

The starting-point is our determined effort to bring every thought and action under the sway of the Kingdom of God.

Nothing can be achieved without inwardness.

*

ALL questions of religion tend towards the one which comprises them all :—How can I conceive of myself as being in the world and at the same time in God?

To the question, how a man can be in the world and in God at one and the same time, we find this answer in the Gospel of Jesus :—"By living and working in this world as one who is not of the world."

*

OUR generation, though so proud of its many achievements, no longer believes in the one thing which is all-essential : the spiritual advance of mankind.

*

ALL our advances in knowledge and power will prove fatal to us in the end unless we retain control over them by a corresponding advance in our spirituality.

Through the power which we win over the forces of nature we get also a gruesome kind of power over our fellow human beings.

*

THROUGH a new invention it becomes possible for one man with a single movement to kill not only a hundred but ten thousand other men.

It is not possible in any battle to avoid the destruction of economic and physical values on both sides.

Generally what happens is that conqueror and conquered are involved in the same fate.

The only way out is that we should mutually renounce the power to injure each other which we now possess.

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But this is necessarily a spiritual act.

*

I wanted to be a doctor that I might be able to work without having to talk.

I gave up my position of professor in the University of Strassburg, my literary work, and my organ playing, in order to go as a doctor to Equatorial Africa.

In the district to which I thought of going, a doctor was the most needed of all needed things.... To become one day the doctor whom these poor creatures needed, it was worthwhile, so I judged, to become a medical student.

Whenever I was inclined to feel that the years I should have to sacrifice were too long, I reminded myself that Hamilcar and Hannibal had prepared for their march on Rome by their slow and tedious conquest of Spain.

*

Let me give you a definition of ethics : it is good to maintain life and further life; it is bad to damage and destroy life.

*

My hair is beginning to turn. My body is beginning to show traces of the exertions I have demanded of it, and of the passage of the years.

I look back with thankfulness to the time when, without needing to husband my strength, I could get through an uninterrupted course of bodily and mental work.

With calmness and humility I look forward to the future, so that I may not be unprepared for renunciation if it be required of me.

Whether we be workers or sufferers, it is assuredly our duty to conserve our powers, as being men who have won their way through to the peace which passeth all understanding.

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